

## My Kids Closet featured in the Ravalli Republic, April 4<sup>th</sup> , 2008!

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### Revolving wardrobes

by STACIE DUCE -  
Ravalli Republic

For parents of young children, there is more than one way to be green. The overly ambitious may try cloth diapers and growing fresh carrots to mash into baby food. But everyone can participate in local efforts to recycle clothes hardly worn before kids grow to the next size.



Tanya Clairmont (left) and Allison Murray, organizers of My Kids Closet. The weekend consignment sale at the fairgrounds provides quality clothing, toys and other kid gear to buyers at discounted prices from hundreds of sellers who took advantage of spring-time closet cleaning. WILL MOSS - Ravalli Republic

My Kids Closet is a highly-anticipated weekend consignment sale held at the fairgrounds where parents can buy and sell quality clothes, toys and kid equipment at bargain

prices. Organized by Allison Murray of Corvallis and Tanya Clairmont of Hamilton, they anticipate hundreds of consignment participants and even more customers.

“It’s a great way to clean out your closets and get rid of nice stuff,” said Murray. “We try to limit it to new and gently used quality items just because that’s what we have room for and what we advertise for.”

After mailing 410 flyers to interested consignors, 240 signed up to bring items and by Wednesday night, more than 100 had unloaded mini-vans and Suburbans full of clothes, toys, puzzles and baby furniture.

What began as the semi-annual Jack and Jill consignment sale by Holli Arnlund almost a decade ago has evolved into a huge event that now runs almost like clock-work.

“The preparation is a lot of hard work,” said Clairmont, “which makes our husbands question our profitability ... but once it’s finally here, it’s incredibly busy and a lot of fun.”

In their third sale together, Clairmont and Murray have friends, family and volunteers who help with set-up, selling and take down. Their work is lightened by the requirements of consignors to bring clean quality clothes on hangers with appropriate tags indicating the size and price of the item as well as the seller’s number so they can get credit.

At the end of the weekend, consignors pick up leftover items as well as 70 percent of the amount they sold. Prices on boy’s pants, for instance, can fluctuate from 50 cents to \$4 depending on the brand, condition and motivation of the seller. Rows of pink, red and yellow summer clothes for girls ranged from 25 cents to \$8.50 for complete outfits with high-end brand names. Sizes range from newborn to teens and this year Murray was making room for a disproportional amount of size 10 clothes for girls.

“You never know what you’re going to get,” said Murray. “Sometimes we wish we had a crystal ball to know how to set this up.”

As of Wednesday night, shelves were lined with gently used shoes of all sizes including pink cowgirl boots, tiny athletic shoes, Robeez leather slippers and blue rubber boots n to name a few. Tables were covered with porcelain dolls, action figures, puzzles and kid videos. Special racks were dedicated to costumes and swimwear as well as maternity clothes. With bags of bibs and rows of strollers and bouncy chairs, parents could furnish an entire nursery with the selection at My Kids Closet.

“I like the idea of so many moms passing things on to each other,” said Clairmont, “especially when everyone’s trying to stretch their dollars these days. Many are friends and have fun visiting while they shop for each other’s stuff, it’s a lot of fun.”

This year, volunteers helping at the sale and corresponding bake sale are students from Corvallis earning money for a summer trip to New York. The annual trip has been a tradition for the gifted and talented students as well as those interested in theater.

Amanda Butt is a Corvallis freshman who has been babysitting and doing odd jobs since last summer to earn the \$1,400 required to visit historical sites and theater events in the Big Apple.

“I’ve never seen the ocean,” Amanda said. “I can’t wait to go.”

Amanda’s mom, Mary Butt, will be a chaperone and was helping her daughter and her friends hang clothes and set up the table for bake-sale items.

Although the 27 students going on the trip have had several fundraisers since last summer n from selling pizza at Logger Days to washing the busses at the school n they are looking forward to one of their last pushes to raise enough money to make the trip a reality.

Mary said about six of the students were involved in My Kids Closet, “Mostly the younger ones who aren’t old enough to have part-time jobs,” she said. “They’ve been busy and it’s getting closer, so it’s very exciting.”

The buzz at the fairgrounds Wednesday night was energetic for all those involved in the sale. Clairmont said it was neat to have the support of the two local consignment shops this year. Little Britches and Repeat Performance supplied hangers and brought round clothes racks. Other businesses in the area, like The Merc in Corvallis supplied shopping carts and the cash register. Old Navy in Missoula donated hundreds of hangers instead of tossing them in the Dumpster.

“In return, we’ll tell them (our consignors) to take their leftover stuff to their (consignment) shops when we’re done,” Clairmont said. Items not picked up by consignors are donated to thrift shops in town.

But with more than 500 buyers anticipated over the weekend, they hope to not have many items left.

“It’s a great thing,” Clairmont said. “We must thrive on stress to do this again. Either that or sleep deprivation, so what’s a little bit more ... at least our closets and crawl spaces are cleaned out.”

My Kids Closet consignment sale is open to the public Saturday, April 5 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a half-price sale on Sunday from noon to 3 p.m. at the fairgrounds in the community building. For more information about participation in future sales, contact Tanya Clairmont at 363-0238 or Allison Murray at 961-4458.



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